

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A method of testing a building alarm system, the method comprising the steps of:
    - (a) providing plural notification appliances connected to a system controller, each notification appliance having a status indicator and an alarm indicator;
    - (b) selecting at the system controller which notification appliances to operate; and
    - (c) communicating from the system controller to each selected notification appliance an instruction to operate its associated status indicator without operating its associated alarm indicator so as to avoid disrupting building occupants.
  2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of providing a test alarm input to the system controller which is specific to one or more alarm condition detectors, and wherein step (b) comprises selecting which notification appliances to operate in response to the specific test alarm input.
  3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising, prior to steps (b) and (c), the steps of polling each of the notification appliances from the system controller and receiving an answer at the system controller in response to the polling step from any of the notification appliances, and wherein step (b) comprises selecting those notification appliances which answer the poll.

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4. The method of Claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises communicating the instruction to a group of addressable notification appliances using a group address.

- 5 5. An alarm system comprising:  
plural notification appliances, each notification appliance having a status indicator and an alarm indicator; and  
a system controller connected to the plural notification appliances, the system controller in a test mode selecting which notification appliances to operate and communicating to each selected notification appliance an instruction to operate its associated status indicator without operating its associated alarm indicator.
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6. The system of Claim 5 wherein the notification appliances are addressable and the system controller communicates the instruction to a group of addressable notification appliances using a group address.

- 20 7. The system of Claim 5 wherein the system controller selects which notification appliances to operate in response to a test alarm input which is specific to one or more alarm condition detectors.

- 25 8. The system of Claim 7 wherein the alarm indicator comprises an audible indicator and a flashing visible indicator and wherein the status indicator of a selected notification appliance is operated in response to the test alarm input at different rates to indicate whether the audible indicator only, the

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flashing visible indicative only, or both audible and flashing visible indicators are intended to be operated.

9. The system of Claim 5 wherein the system controller is operable to poll each of the notification appliances, each notification appliance is operable to send an answer to the system controller in response to the poll, and the system controller selects those notification appliances which answer the poll.

10. The system of Claim 5 wherein the status indicator comprises an LED indicator.

11. The system of Claim 10 wherein the alarm indicator comprises an audible indicator.

12. The system of Claim 10 wherein the alarm indicator comprises a flashing visible indicator.

13. The system of Claim 10 wherein the alarm indicator comprises an audible indicator and a flashing visible indicator.

14. A method comprising the steps of:  
providing plural notification appliances connected to a system controller, each notification appliance having an alarm indicator and a locally-activated switch;  
activating the locally-activated switch of one of the plural notification appliances;

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transmitting a first message from the one activated appliance in response to the switch activation; and

5 receiving the first message at the system controller and transmitting to the activated appliance a second message instructing the activated appliance to operate its associated alarm indicator for a test time interval.

10 15. The method of Claim 14 wherein each notification appliance further includes a status indicator and further including the step of operating the status indicator of the activated appliance in response to the switch activation for a second test time interval.

15 16. The method of Claim 14 wherein each notification appliance further includes a status indicator and further including the steps of operating the status indicators at a periodic rate and extinguishing the status indicator of the activated appliance in response to the switch activation.

20 17. An alarm system comprising:

plural notification appliances, each notification appliance having an alarm indicator and a locally-activated switch, the appliance being programmed to transmit a first message in response to an activation of the switch; and

25 a system controller connected to the plural notification appliances, the system controller receiving the first message from the activated appliance and in response to the first message transmitting to the activated appliance a second

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message instructing the activated appliance to operate its associated alarm indicator for a test time interval.

18. The system of Claim 17 wherein the locally-activated switch is a magnetic-field sensitive switch.

19. The system of Claim 17 wherein the locally-activated switch includes an infrared sensitive switch.

20. The system of Claim 17 wherein each notification appliance further includes a status indicator and wherein the activated appliance is programmed to operate the status indicator in response to the switch activation for a second test time interval.

21. The system of Claim 20 wherein the second message includes an instruction to operate the status indicator of the activated appliance for a third test time interval.

22. The system of Claim 20 wherein the status indicator comprises an LED indicator.

23. The system of Claim 17 wherein each notification appliance further includes a status indicator and wherein the appliances are programmed to operate the status indicator at a periodic rate and the activated appliance is further programmed to extinguish the status indicator in response to the switch activation.

24. The system of Claim 17 wherein the alarm indicator comprises an audible indicator.

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25. The system of Claim 17 wherein the alarm indicator comprises a flashing visible indicator.

26. The system of Claim 17 wherein the alarm indicator comprises an audible indicator and a flashing visible indicator.

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